

A CHRISTMAS DANCE

BY JAMES D. CORROTHERS



EVENIN', dah, Miss Mandy Jane!
See me comin' up de lane!
Speck you waitin' foh me.
Kin' o' late a-gittin' roun'—
Had to walk hysah clean fom town—
But we'll be in time, Ah'm boun',
Do' hit's pu'tty sto'my.

TAKE ma ahm 'n' le's push on
'Cross lots, 'ca'se de time's done gone.
'N we ought to be dah!
Chris'mas ain't de time to crawl
To er ole time country ball.
Preachah may not lak it 't all,
But he'll sho' fime ma dah.

LOOKIEE you'ah! Dah's de light,
Up de road dah to de right!
Let de roads be smooove er rough,
Soon we'll 'jine de measah!
Snow, blow, drif'in lak a bluff,
Cain't come col' er snow cruff
Foh to stop ouh pleasah!

CO'SE Ah b'lebes in doin' right;
Goes to chu'ch o' Sunday night,
Speah'y of it's handy.
But seem lak Ah's gittin' so,
Ef it rain er snow er blow,
Dox' keer ef Ah go er no—
Dis hysah's diff'unt, Mandy.
—New York Mail and Express.

HOW HE GOT OUT OF THE DEBTORS' PRISON

By THOMAS BARBER JUDSON.
[Copyright, 1900, by American Press Association.]

It was visitors' day at Ludlow street jail, New York. Ludlow street jail is a very gentle counterpart of the debtors' prison of the olden time. Its inmates are those in contempt of the inheritance and certain other courts, federal bankrupts, execution and judgment debtors and breach of promise and alimony men.

John Decker had finished his breakfast of rolls, coffee and an egg—he could have breakfasted more heartily had he been able to order from a neighboring restaurant—and was sitting in the lounging room reading a morning paper when a card was handed him. He looked at it, frowned and said:

"I understood when I was put in here that no prisoner was obliged to see his wife. Tell the sheriff that I claim the immunity promised."

The message was delivered, and presently the sheriff himself appeared. "Your wife says, Mr. Decker, that she has come with the olive branch, and she told me to say in case you declined to receive her that she has your son Johnny with her and wishes to know if you will see him."

The hard lines on Decker's face relaxed.

"Yes, if you will bring him in here."

The sheriff retired, and in a few minutes a boy of six came bounding into the room and, springing into his father's arms, covered his face with kisses. They were returned in kind, while a tear stood in the man's eye.

"Mamma gave me a message for you, papa. She says she was told that you were hiding money."

"Who told her that?"

"Mrs. Spillre."

"That Jezebel! She made all the trouble."

"And mamma says I was sick and baby was sick, and she was turned out of the rooms, and nothing to buy meat or medicines, and—"

The man put his hand on the boy's mouth.

"Never mind all that, Johnny. I can't bear it."

"And mamma says she's been studying stenography and has got a place. She doesn't wish you to stay here any longer."

"What does she wish me to do?"

"First to forgive her for putting you in here."

"What next?"

"I wish you to come home."

"Johnny, dear, I wish I could do both, but I can do neither."

"Not for me, poppy? Please do—just for me, you know."

"Very well; I'll do the first for you."

"And you'll come home?"

"No; I can't do that."

"Oh, pop, please do!"

"There will be time enough to consider that in the future."

"No, there won't. Mamma says— but I wasn't to tell you."

"Tell me what?"

"That it'll be too late then."

"Oh, it will be too late! In other words, she must dictate just when a reconciliation may take place."

"What's that?"

"Make it up."

"No, that isn't it. I know why, but I won't tell. Mamma says you're so proud. That's one reason."

"I don't understand, Johnny."

"Mamma says if I tell you you'll never come home. You must come home without knowing."

The father studied the boy's face musingly for a time and at last said:

"Well, Johnny, I could never refuse you anything. I'll forgive your mother for putting me in here, and I'll come home, wherever that may be. I suppose it's in a dirty garret. But tell your mother that I won't permit her to do the work for the family. I know where I can get \$10 a week as porter. It's pretty hard to take such a place after having employed a hundred men myself, but I've learned that what can't be cured must be endured."

"Oh, poppy!" The boy threw his arms spasmodically around his father's neck, gave him a quick hug and kiss, jumped down and ran away to announce the success of his mission.

It was several days after this before the red tape that held John Decker in prison for not paying his wife her alimony was cut and he walked out a free man. The hour was 5 in the afternoon. Boarding an elevated train, he started for an address uptown that had been given him as the abode of his wife and children. Leaving the train, he passed down a cross street. Coming to the number that had been given him as his family abode, he concluded there had been a mistake. The place was a handsome apartment house. At the elevator he asked the uniformed boy if he knew where Mrs. Decker lived.

"Fifth floor," replied the boy.

Wonderingly the ex-prisoner entered the elevator, and when it stopped Johnny's eyes were glistening through the grating. In another moment a reunited family were clinging in one embrace.

Mrs. Decker's money had been invested in her husband's business. One of the largest debtors to the firm who had contributed principally to the failure had astonished Mrs. Decker by paying her his debt, a fortune in itself. She wisely brought about a reconciliation with her husband before he knew that she was independent, knowing that after he was aware of it his position would be very different.

There followed a happy reunion dinner.

AN ODD COURTSHIP.

By M. QUAD.
[Copyright, 1900, by Associated Literary Press.]

The wife of Deacon Hiram Platt had been dead three years when it came to his ears that people were wondering why he didn't place a tombstone at her grave. At her death the sorrowing husband had fully intended to give her a monument thirty feet high; three months later he had reduced the height to fifteen feet; then he had gone down foot by foot until he figured that a common gravestone would be all that was expected. One may have his own ideas about such matters, but when people begin to talk he must consult the ideas of others to a certain extent. Therefore Deacon Platt hustled around to put up a stone.

About the time the deacon lost his wife Mrs. Samantha Taylor, living in the same village, lost her husband. She also had a thirty foot monument in her mind, and she also scaled it down to a plain, cheap stone. Further, there came a time when gossip criticized her for the unmarked grave, and she set about doing something. She had removed to another village, but gossip follows one everywhere. It thus came about one summer day, when the deacon drove out to the country graveyard to fix up things, he found the widow there for the same object. The graves of their dead were not fifty feet apart. The deacon had a look of sorrow on his face and the widow had tears in her eyes as they shook hands.

"He was a noble man," said the deacon, referring, of course, to the lamented Taylor.

"And she was all that a wife should be," replied the widow, referring, of course, to the lamented Mrs. Platt.

"I am glad to know that you mourn him."

"And I am glad to know that you mourn her."

"Her time had come, and she had to go."

"And the same with him."

The weeds had to be cleared away and the mounds rounded up and sodded and the stones set. They worked together at this. They sorrowed for about half an hour, and then it was something else. When their backs ached and they were ready to quit work for the day the deacon helped her into her buggy with the remark:

"I have seemed to feel Mrs. Platt looking down on me this afternoon."

"And I have felt the presence of my dear lost husband," she replied.

Then they both looked very solemn, and she drove away to return on the morrow and find the deacon there before her. He repeated that her lamented was a noble man, and she repeated that his lamented was all that a wife should be. They cut down and lugged away weeds and briars and brought dirt and sods, and when they rested they sat close together on an old bench. It was during one of these resting spells that the deacon sighed three times in succession and said:

"Widder Taylor, when night had come and you were sitting alone in your lonesomeness did you ever think it possible that you could find another man as good as George was?"

"Why, while he was a noble man, there must be other noble men in the world," she replied.

"Yes, widder, and other noble women, though I never had no fault to find with Hanner. I am sure we loved 'em."

"Yes, we did."

"And it grieved us to see them go."

"It did."

"But they are better off in that brighter land."

Then they parted and went home, and it was noticeable that neither looked as solemn as before. They were not smiling, but the solemn looks had somehow chased themselves away. The next day was to see the end of their work, and they both got there early. The deacon seemed to press the widow's hand when he helped her out of the buggy, and she seemed a bit confused over it, but this may have been all imagination. By mid-afternoon the stones were in place, and as they retreated a few paces to survey them the deacon solemnly said:

"Widder, if your lost husband can look down on earth he is seeing that stun and saying to himself that it's good enough for anybody."

"Yes," she sighed, "and your Hanner must say the same thing. We could have got monuments, of course, but—"

"But monuments attract lightning," finished the deacon.

"And are blown over in high winds."

"And crows use them to roost on. Yes, I think our lost ones ought to feel quite chirpy. We have the best two lots here."

"And they are picturesquely situated, deacon."

"Yes, purty lonesome, deacon."

"I think I'll drive over to see you tomorrow afternoon."

"I'll be expecting you."

"And we'll talk."

"Yes."

"And we'll talk—and talk."

"We will."

And three months later, when they were married, the gossips were mean about it. They said that the couple had done their courting in a graveyard, but we know better. It was done just outside the gate.

Della Pringle Is Wealthy Actress

Has Had Many Successive Profitable Seasons—Here Holiday Week.

Miss Della Pringle, who comes to the opera house for the week beginning December 27, is one of the wealthiest of the minor stars on the American stage. For a number of years she has not had a season that has not been exceedingly profitable.

While a very popular actress, her success is not due entirely to her own popularity, but quite as much to the fact that she insists on a competent supporting company and upon giving to the people the kind of plays they most enjoy.

She does not carry a street band, the expense thus saved going into salaries, enabling her to engage a higher grade of actors and actresses than would otherwise be the case.

Her engagement in this city will be for six nights and Saturday matinee, and during her engagement she will be seen in a number of the most successful plays of recent years.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given, that the undersigned have been by the County Court of Wallawa county, Oregon, duly appointed as joint administrators of the estate of Jobe H. Halsey, deceased; and all persons having claims against said deceased or his estate are hereby required to present the same with the proper vouchers to said administrators or either of them, at Enterprise, Oregon, or to their attorney, D. W. Sheahan, at his office at Enterprise, in said county and state, within six months from and after the 16th day of December, 1909, the same being the date of the first publication of this notice.

Dated at Enterprise, Oregon, this 16th day of December, 1909.

ELSIE L. HALSEY,
WILLIAM MAKIN,
Joint Administrators.

NOT BURIED AT SEA.

The Humane French Boatman and the Dead Englishman.

A long expected French lugger was seen making for the roadstead, and the Lowestoft free traders were on the alert, anxiously seeking an opportunity for communicating with her crew. While they waited for a lapse of vigilance on the part of the excise men a boat was lowered from the lugger and rowed toward the shore. A curious crowd of bench men and excise men assembled to meet her, and as she came in on the crest of a roller it was observed that she contained a coffin.

The French boatmen had a mournful tale to tell. On board the lugger had been an Englishman suffering from an illness which soon proved fatal. In his last moments of consciousness he had begged the captain not to bury him at sea, but to keep his body until a resting place could be found for it under the green turf of a churchyard in his native land. Sympathy with his sad fate and the knowledge that the lugger was not far from the English coast had induced the captain to consent, and now he had sent the body ashore for burial. In spite of his broken English the Frenchmen's spokesman told his tale well.

Both excise men and beach men—especially the latter—loudly expressed their admiration of the captain's conduct. A parson was summoned, and in a little while a mournful procession made its way from the beach to the churchyard. Even the chief officer of the excise men was present and is said to have shed tears.

That night the local "resurrectionists" were busy, and at dawn the churchyard contained a desecrated grave. A little way inland, however, in the midst of the marshes, a smuggler's store received the addition of a coffin filled with silks and lace.—"Highways and Byways in East Anglia," by W. A. Dutt.

Heads Much Alike.

Most expert craniologists insist that it is extremely difficult to determine sex from the skull, but admit there are a few distinctions which taken together indicate sex. Perhaps the most marked distinction is the prominence of the bony projection over the nose. The skull in man is thicker and stronger, and the mastoid processes beneath the ear are larger. Broca is authority for the opinion that if the skull rests on the mastoid processes it is almost certainly a man's. In woman the top of the head appears fatter, while in the masculine head the curve from before backward is more smooth and even. Greek sculptors always recognize this.—Exchange.

Peculiar Flower.

In South America there is a peculiar flower which can only be seen when the wind is blowing. The plant belongs to the cactus family, and when the wind blows a number of beautiful flowers protrude from little lumps on the stalk.

SANTA CLAUS A STRANGER.

He is Officially Unknown to Uncle Sam's Mail Agents.

The postoffice department does not know Santa Claus. The old saint has no official existence so far as Uncle Sam's mail agents are concerned. This is due entirely to the fact that Santa Claus lives everywhere at the same time instead of having a single local habitation like other people. It is very sad, but it cannot be helped. Letters which children address to Santa Claus or Kris Kringle must go straight to the dead letter office.

Some time ago an effort on behalf of the children was made to induce the postoffice department to permit postmasters to open all letters addressed to Santa Claus and turn them over to the parents of the child correspondent or to some local organization having a Christmas fund to spend, but the attorney general for the department rendered an adverse decision, holding as follows:

If postmasters were granted authority to open all such letters and select those which they thought proper to deliver to persons applying for them, there would be temptation and opportunity for postmasters and other employees to open letters indiscriminately, some of which contain inclosures of value, and give us an excuse for such action the authority granted by the department.

The department's legal adviser also was of the opinion that, if permission were granted to deliver such letters to benevolent societies and individuals, it would be difficult for the department to draw the line where benevolence ends and commercialism begins. Many persons desire such letters for use in newspapers and magazine stories, the name of the child of some prominent public man attached to such a letter making it especially valuable for that purpose and often correspondingly embarrassing to the parent of the child. Furthermore, the opinion states, such a practice would violate the principle of the sanctity of the seal, which is one of the best features of our postal system, and the department would continually be open to serious suspicion.

Candles For Christmas.

Christmas candlemakers are busy for many months in the year. It would be impossible to estimate how many hundreds of thousands of dozens of pretty little colored wax candles are required for Christmas trees all over Europe and America. There are also candles for church decoration at Christmas. Whereas the Christmas tree tapers are, some of them, so tiny as to require seventy-two to make a pound, the great altar shafts of pure beeswax will sometimes stand six feet and weigh forty pounds apiece.—Tit-Bits.

Avoiding Temptation.

Hammert—Styngham has never bought a Christmas tree for his children.

Callahan—Probably he is afraid of temptation.

Hammert—Temptation?

Callahan—I mean that he is afraid that if he did buy a tree he would be tempted to buy something to hang on it.—Town and Country.

Hurry Up Santa Claus!

Yander Mistah Chris'mus,
Loun' long de way.

"He slower than a railroad"—
Dat what chillen say.

Dev wants 'im fer ter hurry up
An' pass de time er day.

Dreamin' 'bout de comin' er de Chris'mus!
—Atlanta Constitution.

THE TERROR'S CHRISTMAS.

Turkeys Were \$17 Each During the Siege of Paris.

When the Christmas day of 1870 dawned upon Paris the city had been in the iron grip of the German investment for about three months. The winter was a bitterly cold one, the thermometer registering 10 degrees below freezing point on Christmas morning. The Seine was frozen over.

The poor's daily rations were a few ounces of horseflesh and a piece of repulsive looking black bread.

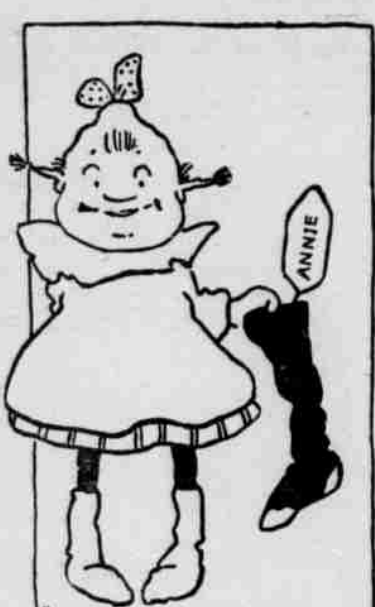
By Dec. 25 food prices had reached their highest point since the beginning of the siege. On Nov. 13 a pound of butter fetched \$14 and a rabbit \$3.50. By Dec. 19 rabbits had risen to \$5, a box of sardines brought \$2.50 and eggs 25 cents apiece. For one's Christmas dinner one could buy a goose for \$10 or a turkey for \$17. Pigeons were \$3 each, and a small fowl could be obtained for \$5. Ham was \$1.50 a pound. As for vegetables, carrots and turnips were 4 cents each, and a bushel of potatoes cost \$6.25. There was hardly any milk in Paris, and the little there was had to be preserved for the sick and wounded. However, there were oceans of wine, and the wineshops did a roaring trade.

For some time before Christmas the starving people had been feeding on cats, rats and dogs until by Dec. 25 a dish of cat's flesh was hardly obtainable. Dog was 60 cents a pound, and fine rats fetched 14 cents each. Many domestic pets were killed for food. "Poor Azor!" said a humorous citizen as he finished a stew made from his favorite dog. "How he would have enjoyed these bones!"

With true Parisian light heartedness the citizens tried to make the best of things, and the cafes and restaurants were almost their normal aspect. At half past 10, however, an order of Trochu closed every shop and cafe, and by 11 o'clock Paris had gone to bed.

The midnight mass of Christmas eve was celebrated as usual in the churches, which were crowded with praying, weeping women. Newspapers appeared as usual, some of them containing glowing accounts of perfectly imaginary French successes. The satirical sheets were even more bitter and venomous than at other times and published scathing caricatures. Some showed the fallen emperor, Napoleon III., as a shoeblack at King William's boots, or as a beggar with his pockets turned inside out, or as a traitor handing over France to murderers, or as a thief making off with millions of the nation's money. Others depicted Julius Favre in tears and pocketing Bismarck's gold and Trochu handing over the keys of Paris to a Prussian in exchange for a bag of coin. In all the idea of Parisians that France had been betrayed by those who ought to have protected her was prevalent.

So at this season of peace and good will suffering Paris was nearly at her last gasp. Owing to the tenacity of her rulers and citizens, however, her agony was to be prolonged for some weeks longer, as it was not until February that the negotiations for a capitulation began.



"If I was only Santa Claus,"
Said Annie with a grin.
'I know of just one stocking—
I'd put all the presents in!'"



The Quest of the Auto.
Mrs. Newlywed—I am hoping and praying that my hubby will give me an auto for Christmas.
Her Friend—How long are you married?
Mrs. Newlywed—Six months.
Her Friend—Well, hoping and praying may fetch it this year, but next year it will have to be sobbing and jawing.—Judge.